

The Resource Conservation Challenge

The National Waste Minimization Partnership Program and Priority Chemicals



The National Waste Minimization Partnership Program is a new, voluntary program. It fosters partnerships between the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and waste generators that focus on reducing 30 priority chemicals in waste.

Challenge to Industry

We are challenging waste generators, particularly industry, to reduce the generation of 30 priority chemicals commonly found in waste by 50 percent by 2005. Reducing the release of priority chemicals in all life-cycle stages is a prime goal of the Agency's Resource Conservation Challenge. These are persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic chemicals that contaminate our land, air, water, plants, and animals. By achieving this goal, we will not only eliminate almost 76 million pounds of priority chemicals, but we also will better protect human health and our ecosystems.

To accomplish our goal of reducing priority chemicals, we are forming partnerships with companies, federal agencies, industry associations, states, and tribes. To eliminate priority chemicals in waste, we will encourage waste minimization techniques, such as substituting chemicals, changing manufacturing processes, reusing products, and recycling activities. Besides enhancing our environment, these techniques will reduce risks, improve efficiency, and cut costs in manufacturing operations and waste management.

Current partners have pledged to reduce specific amounts of the 30 priority chemicals and other chemicals found in waste. Some have already made dramatic reductions in priority chemicals, especially lead. We plan to recruit at least 100 partners over the next three years, from both Fortune 500 companies and small businesses. National Waste Minimization Partners receive public recognition from EPA for their hazardous waste reductions and environmental achievements.



Tracking Our Progress

Hazardous waste generation has significantly declined over the last 25 years. Our Waste Minimization Trends Report describes this decline in generation, and subsequent management of hazardous waste priority chemicals. The Report uses data collected through the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) from 1991-2000. TRI data identifies the chemical volumes most likely associated with hazardous waste generation.

TRI data showed a 42 percent reduction in disposal of 20 of the 30 priority chemicals from an estimated 152 million pounds in 1991 to an estimated 89 million pounds in 2000, a decline of about 63 million pounds. Some industries showing more dramatic reductions were inorganic chemical manufacturing, battery manufacturing, and chlor-alkali manufacturing. We are enlisting industries that produce the highest volumes of the 30 priority chemicals, which include metal smelters and refiners, steel mills and blast furnaces, glass and glassware manufacturers, and petroleum refiners, among others.

We believe the National Waste Minimization Partnership Program will not only achieve great reductions in the amount of hazardous waste we generate, but also place more emphasis on conserving our natural resources.

For More Information

More information on the National Waste Minimization Partnership Program and the Waste Minimization Trends Report is available at www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/conserve. We also would like your suggestions on how we can meet the national reduction goal. Email us at rcc-challenge@epa.gov or write to:

U.S. EPA
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW (5305W)
Washington, DC 20460
Attn: RCC

You can also obtain information by calling the RCRA Call Center at 703-412-9810 or TDD 703-412-3323 (hearing impaired) if you live within the Washington Metropolitan area. Call 800-424-9346 or TDD 800-553-7672 if you are a long-distance caller.



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